

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
SALEM, CONNECTICUT
MEETING MINUTES
MARCH 17, 2014**

PRESENT

Frank Sroka/ Chairman
Kenneth Bondi
Wendy Mikolinski

ABSENT

Ada Vaill
Andrew Lightner
Jenifer Lee

GUESTS

Cindy Noe/ Recording Secretary

Kennedy Munro
Kevin Lyden

1. CALLED TO ORDER

Frank Sroka called the meeting to order 7:08pm. Alternate member discussion took place.

M/S/C – Mikolinski/ Sroka to seat Alt, Kenneth Bondi as a full Commission member in Jenifer Lee's absence.

Vote: Unanimous

2. CHANGES TO THE AGENDA

None

3. ELECTION OF A SECRETARY

The Commission discussed nominating Jenifer Lee as Commission secretary.

M/S/C- Mikolinski/ Sroka to appoint Jenifer Lee as secretary for the Economic Development Commission.

Vote: Unanimous

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM LAST MEETING ON JUNE 17, 2013

M/S/C- Bondi/ Mikolinski to approve June 17, 2013 minutes as presented.

Vote: Unanimous

5.) COMMUNICATIONS

None

6.) PUBLIC COMMENT

None

7.) REPORTS

B. SELECTMAN'S REPORT

K. Lyden presented the Selectman's report. Lyden stated that USPS is working on a new contract for a local business to house a new contract post office. He stated that several businesses have followed up with paperwork to request their business be the new home for the post office. Lyden stated that the Planning and Zoning Board approved Burnett's County Gardens to extend their business to a farmer's market/café. The side business would occupy the 6,000 square foot area that Restore occupied. Lyden also stated that Burnett's Country Gardens is currently running a market study to see if the business could flourish there before moving forward. Lyden mentioned that Treasure Hill Farm is currently looking into possible businesses that could fill the 3-4 available business lots on the street side of their property. Lyden told the Commission that Two Brothers is going to be opening a bakery/ gift store in the unoccupied space located in the former Bob's Deli. He was at the end of the building. He was not certain on an opening date for the proposed business. Lyden stated that Salem currently has five new home constructions going on and that he feels the town is coming out of recession and is looking very healthy. Lyden gave thanks to Kenneth Bondi for his hard work and dedication cleaning up store front windows at the Town Center building. Lyden stated that CL&P is currently the largest tax paper in the town of Salem. Lyden stated that Richard Serra, Town Planner, is available to the Commission for reports and advice. Richard Serra is available from 1pm-4pm on Wednesdays. Sroka will set up a meeting with Richard Serra to discuss any help that he could offer. Sroka questioned if the landscaping is done on the northwest corner of the roundabout, where Bad Boys Toys used to be. Lyden answered that it is complete, that no further construction or landscaping can be done because of the wetlands that are there. Lyden suggest that the Commission invites Mike from SECTRE and Serra, the town planner, to an EDC meeting in the near future. He feels the Commission could benefit from a joint meeting. Lyden notified the Commission that the University of Connecticut is doing a street architecture and landscaping Study/Overview for the town center area from Town Hall to the Roundabout. Lyden suggested to the Commission to advertise through mailing and newspaper ads. Kennedy Munro stated she will research some online marketing opportunities.

B. P & Z LIAISON (ADA VAILL)

Ada Vaill was absent from the meeting.

8.) OLD BUSINESS

A. TOWN BROCHURE

The EDC discussed the current look of the Salem Town Brochure. Mikolinski stated that current photos should be replaced with photos that show people milling about and traffic flowing around the roundabout. She feels the current photos show Salem as being

desolate. Bondi stated he feels the brochure should have some bold writing and more flair. Bondi and Mikolinski offered to work on making some changes to the current brochure and finalizing a more vibrant brochure that better displays Salem. Sroka stated he would obtain the template of the current brochure for their use.

B. BUSINESS OWNERS SURVEY

Sroka stated that this project still needs to be worked on and would be discussed at a future meeting.

C. PACKET PROJECT FOR NEW BUSINESS OWNERS CONSIDERING SALEM

Sroka will discuss this idea with Serra. Sroka stated that infrastructure is one of the biggest problems for the town enticing new business to reside here. He feels the biggest issue is the lack of 3 phase electrical power. Sroka also stated another problem is that new construction businesses would also have to drill wells and install septic systems.

D. PASSPORT PROJECT

Sroka stated that this project is an idea of a loyalty program card to be punched at different Salem businesses for some benefit when completely punched. This project is currently on hold.

E. TOURISM MAP PROJECT

This project is on hold right now. The Commission feels other projects take precedence over this project. Tourism map will be an expensive project.

F. SALEM BUSINESS DATA BASE

Sroka will talk to Lyden regarding data base information.

G. SALEM TOWN CENTER WINDOW IMPROVEMENT PROJECT (K. BONDI)

Bondi stated he would like the Commission to approve \$300.00 in window improvements to match the amount funded by the building owner. Bondi said he would handle the distribution of money to help the businesses and will turn in receipts to the Commission.

M/S/C- Bondi/ Mikolinski to appropriate \$300.00 from the EDC budget for window improvements with Bondi handling the distribution of the funds.

Vote: Unanimous

H. OPEN HOUSE TO SHOW VACANT BUSINESSES

Sroka stated that an open house will be difficult because of scheduling issues. The Commission discussed possible business that they feel would flourish in Salem. Mikolinski believes a drive through Dry Cleaners/ Laundromat would be very successful in Salem. The Commission as a whole feels a restaurant that serves breakfast would also be very successful. Bondi thought a motel might be successful in Salem. He stated that the Chesterfield Motel in Montville is very successful and hardly has vacancies. Mikolinski felt an indoor activity business for children would also do well. Sroka feels an outdoor activities center would also flourish here such as go karts/ batting cages. Mikolinski believes that her neighbor is currently looking into opening such a business in Salem. Mikolinski feels a burger restaurant close to Salem Valley Farms would do very well. Sroka stated that there is a vacant Bingham property located behind Salem Valley Farm that could possibly house a burger restaurant. The members of EDC feel that more advertising of events that are unique to Salem need to be better showcased to entice businesses to come to Salem. Some of those events are the Apple Festival, Mitchell Horse Farm Concert, and the 5K Run, which is age graded. Sroka feels a calendar could be made to promote those events and possible future events. Munro stated she could also post the events online for the EDC. The Commission feels that more events need to be scheduled at the Salem Pavilion. The Commission stated that events could be local bands, car shows, vintage markets, movie night, etc.

I.OPEN HOUSE FOR SALEM BUSINESS AT PAVILION

No discussion took place.

9.) NEW BUSINESS

A. 2014/2015 BUDGET STATUS

Sroka and Lyden notified that the Board of Finance approved a \$2,500.00 budget for EDC for fiscal year 2014/2015. Lyden stated the BOF stated that if the EDC needed more appropriations they could always make a request to the BOF via the Board of Selectmen.

B. 2012/2013 ANNUAL REPORT

Sroka will talk to Susan Spang in regards to this.

C. OTHERV NEW BUSINESS

No further discussion took place.

10. NEXT MEETING/ MEETING ADJOURNED

The next EDC meeting is April 21, 2014 at 7pm.

M/S/C- Bondi/ Mikolinski to adjourn meeting at 9:10pm

Vote: Approved Unanimously

Respectfully Submitted

Cindy Noe

Recording Secretary